

Refugee Reports

A News Service of the U.S. Committee for Refugees
1025 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 920 Washington, DC 20005 (202) 347-3507

Volume XII, Number 5

May 31, 1991

TPS REGISTRATION DEADLINE NEARS

With only five weeks to go for Salvadorans to register for temporary protected status (TPS)--18-months of protection from deportation with the option to work legally--the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) published its final regulation stipulating the registration procedure and the fees involved.

Both of the original sponsors of Salvadoran safe haven legislation, Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.) and Rep. Joe Moakley (D-Mass.), have introduced amendments to the 1990 Immigration Act that would extend the registration period.

"Registration for TPS benefits was intended to be a simple, efficient, one-step process in which Salvadorans receive work authorization and temporary legal status at the time of registration," said DeConcini. "Unfortunately, because of excessive registration fees imposed by the INS, less than 15 percent of the estimated 500,000 eligible Salvadorans have registered for TPS benefits with only six weeks remaining in the registration period."

The identical bills, S. 1071 and H.R. 2332, would extend the registration deadline by four months--until October 31, 1991.

An INS source said, "The Administration hasn't opposed [the Moakley-DeConcini bill], but we're not supporting it either." But he went on to say, "It could cause us problems if we extended the registration period and the numbers [of registrants] didn't increase. Keeping the facilities open would cause a financial overload." Another INS source said, "We believe a four-month extension to be premature."

Will June Be Busting Out All Over? Most Central American service providers anticipate a sharp increase in the number of applicants in the final month of registration. "We began seeing the June surge the week of May 13," said Patrick Young, director of legal services of the Central American Refugee Center (CARECEN) in Long Island. Young said that his office has tracked a 30 percent increase in Salvadoran pre-registrants walking into their offices since the beginning of May, and the numbers are increasing daily.

IN THIS ISSUE:

With one month to go for Salvadorans to register for temporary protected status, the INS introduces a family cap on fees. But is it too little, too late? Bill Frelick examines this question, and looks at hurdles facing the INS's new asylum procedure 1

• Update

Soviets pass liberalized emigration law, but FY 91 refugee admissions from the USSR slow down 5
Congress approves \$556 million Iraqi refugee relief package 5
Khartoum processing resumes ... 6
Proposed Rule reimposes ban on HIV-positive refugees and immigrants 6
ORR proposes social service and targeted assistance allocations 6

• Recent Developments

Kurdish repatriation begins 7
Chaos in the Horn of Africa 8

• Feature

Ethiopian refugee resettlement in the United States 11
ECDC joins resettlement ranks 13

• Job Board

• Statistics

U.S. Deportations FY 89, 90 16

NEW ASYLUM OFFICES OFF TO SHAKY START

The ribbons were officially cut on April 2 inaugurating the Immigration and Naturalization Service's (INS) long-awaited new asylum system, but nearly two months into the new regime questions remain about the financial resources to maintain it, how it will handle a growing backlog of cases, and the ability of seven offices to deal with asylum requests nationwide.

The most immediate danger for the 82 members of the newly hired and trained asylum corps is of being overwhelmed by a backlog of cases awaiting adjudication. A backlog of 97,288 cases on October 1, 1990 grew to 114,044 by April 1, 1991, despite a beefed-up contingent of 117 full- and part-time asylum officers during that transition period to the new system.

The asylum corps was intended to adjudicate 65,000 cases per year. This means that it would take about two years to work through the backlog if no new asylum cases were filed. However, 29,191 new cases have already been filed in the first six months of FY 91.

In addition, the settlement of the American Baptist Churches (ABC) v. Thornburgh suit will likely bring tens of thousands of additional cases to the asylum officers, starting January 1, 1992 for Guatemalans and October 1, 1992, at the earliest, for Salvadorans who were registered for temporary protected status (TPS--see lead story). Under the ABC settlement, the INS agreed to rehear or hear for the first time asylum claims from Guatemalans present in the United States as of October 1, 1990 and of Salvadorans present in the United States as of September 19, 1990 (see Refugee Reports, Vol. XII, No. 1). The Los Angeles office will also face another 3,000 cases as a result of the settlement of the Mendez class-action suit. The potential for another 20,000 asylum seekers per year looms on the horizon if Canada proceeds with plans to return asylum seekers to the United States if they crossed the U.S. border to enter Canada.

Penny Pinching Closely linked to the challenge of addressing the backlog is the question of budget. Originally budgeted for \$7.2 million, the asylum corps received more than \$1 million in cuts before it even got off the ground.

Arthur Helton, director of the Refugee Project of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, said, "The relatively limited resources devoted by the U.S. authorities and the current backlog of over 100,000 cases may render the new system unworkable at the outset."

Helton pointed out that Canada spends about \$80 million to run its asylum system and that 11 European countries spent the equivalent of \$5 billion on asylum adjudication in 1989.

By contrast, the U.S. has allocated a total of \$6.14 million for the new system, including not only the seven asylum offices, but also a documentation center intended to apprise them of human rights conditions in asylum seekers' countries of origin.

"Batching" and Circuit Riding With only seven locations nationwide, concern has been raised about how the asylum officers will handle asylum requests from other parts of the country (see Refugee Reports, Vol. XII, No. 1).

Early on, the INS had suggested that applicants within a 300-mile radius of each asylum office--Los Angeles/San Diego; San Francisco; Chicago; Newark; Arlington, Va.; Miami; and Houston--would be expected to travel to the closest office for their interview. Outside the 300-mile radius, the INS had said that it would "circuit ride" to conduct interviews in more remote locations. Private groups quickly pointed out that such a policy would greatly inconvenience applicants (and service agencies) in cities such as Boston and Philadelphia that have no asylum office of their own but are within the 300-mile radius of another office (in their case, Newark, New Jersey).

In a May 17 letter to Christine Gaffney,

**ASYLUM CLAIMS IN FY 90
BY INS DISTRICT OFFICES**

DISTRICT	RECEIPTS FY 1990	% OF TOTAL RECEIPTS
<u>EASTERN REGION</u>		
Baltimore	4,174	5.67%
Boston	751	1.02%
Buffalo	162	0.22%
Newark	1,099	1.49%
New York	2,810	3.82%
Philadelphia	782	1.06%
Portland, ME	29	0.04%
San Juan	74	0.10%
Washington	3,349	4.55%
<u>SOUTHERN REGION</u>		
Atlanta	742	1.01%
Dallas	353	0.48%
El Paso	90	0.12%
Harlingen	244	0.33%
Houston	266	0.36%
Miami	21,533	29.25%
New Orleans	265	0.36%
San Antonio	106	0.14%
<u>NORTHERN REGION</u>		
Anchorage	67	0.09%
Chicago	1,033	1.40%
Cleveland	250	0.34%
Denver	127	0.17%
Detroit	991	1.35%
Kansas City	94	0.13%
Omaha	41	0.06%
Portland, OR	153	0.21%
St. Paul	241	0.33%
Seattle	104	0.14%
<u>WESTERN REGION</u>		
Honolulu	27	0.04%
Los Angeles	27,056	36.75%
Phoenix	645	0.88%
San Diego	1,009	1.37%
San Francisco	4,954	6.73%
TOTAL FY 90	73,621	100.00%

Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service.

the associate director of the American Council for Nationalities Service (ACNS), John W. Cummings, the acting associate commissioner for Refugees, Asylum, and Parole, wrote that "INS Asylum Officers will circuit ride to all existing INS District Offices (except New York City and Baltimore)," including Boston and Philadelphia. He said that a notice to this effect would soon be published in the Federal Register.

Gaffney had suggested that the INS permit voluntary agencies to "batch" cases to minimize the number of time-consuming trips to asylum offices. She pointed to the success of batching of cases during the legalization period of the Immigration Reform and Control Act and for Salvadorans registering for TPS.

Cummings suggested that proposals for batching cases should be addressed to specific asylum offices. He said, "We are studying the feasibility of 'batching' asylum cases for voluntary agencies in areas that are long distances from the nearest asylum adjudication city."

Lawyers Committee Petitions for Regulations on Asylum Criteria

A week after the new system started, the Lawyers Committee submitted a formal petition to the INS calling for regulations to be issued to establish uniform criteria for refugee status determination.

Helton said, "Only a formally adopted rule, comprehensively setting forth eligibility criteria, can address the problems of inconsistency and unfairness in refugee status determination."

The 24-page petition states, "The principal problem of refugee and asylum adjudications is the interpretation of the substantive elements of the law, primarily because these elements are only briefly set forth in the [Refugee] Act's definition of 'refugee'.... This body of law and practice can be, and ought to be, consolidated in the form of a single coherent regulation that can be applied universally."

The petition takes key phrases from the statute, such as "persecution", "well-founded fear," or "social group," and cites precedents in domestic and international law that should guide an adjudicator.

(Continued from page 1)

Although seeing "a noticeable increase in the number of applicants starting at the end of April," Eric Udell, CARECEN's TPS coordinator in Houston, Texas, observed, "There are plenty of people out there waiting until the last minute." However, the major obstacles to registration still have not been overcome. He lists "fear and suspicion based on the reputation of the INS in the Salvadoran community" and the "formidable price of \$135 for a person who wants to work" as factors continuing to keep people away.

Despite projections and predictions of a surge by community groups, the numbers recorded by the INS Central Office suggest that relatively modest numbers have come forward thus far. As of May 24, the total number of applicants for Salvadoran TPS was 71,818. This is well below the INS's own projection of 150,000 applicants, or of private estimates that as many as 500,000 applicants could be eligible nationwide.

INS statistics show that the majority of applicants are still registering in the INS's Eastern Region (39,824) despite the widely held view that far more Salvadorans live in the Western Region, particularly in the Los Angeles area. Thus far, only 17,562 have applied in the West. A total of 12,922 have registered in the Southern Region and 1,510 in the North.

An INS source agreed with the assessment of private groups that "applicants have definitely increased in the past few weeks." She added, "We anticipate that the majority will come in at the end of the registration period." Another INS source said that a surge in June can be anticipated based on what happened in the final month of the legalization application period under the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act. He said that INS offices would remain open until midnight on the last weekend of June.

Final Regulations Introduce Family Cap on TPS Registration Fees The major change brought about by the May 22 final regulations was the introduction of a family cap so that only the first three members of a family would each have to pay the \$75 TPS registration fee.

After the third family member, additional family members will now register without paying

the TPS fee. Therefore, the maximum amount a family may be charged for TPS itself is now \$225. However, each family member who intends to work is still required to pay a \$60 work authorization fee every six months for the duration of TPS protection.

In a lengthy supplementary preamble to the final rule, the INS noted that more than 1,000 comments were received in response to the interim rule that was published on January 7. "Almost all of the commenters stated that the fees to be charged by the program should be reduced and that a 'family cap' should be instituted so that the cost of the program is not prohibitive for large families. Additionally, commenters requested that no fee be charged for re-registration."

The INS decided to maintain the initial filing fee of \$75 for Salvadorans, but to drop the re-registration fee and institute the family cap. Up until this change, a Salvadoran family of four would have paid \$1,520 for 18-months of TPS protection and work authorization.

But some continue to view the changes skeptically. "The final regulations didn't help anyone as far as we can tell," said CARECEN's Young. "The problem is not: Dad and Mom can pay, but the kids can't. The problem is: Dad can barely pay himself. And he's not legally married to Mom."

Young said that 90 percent of the applicants in New York are adult males, although females comprise an estimated 40 percent of the local Salvadoran population. He expressed doubt that the regulatory changes would result in more families registering, and that women and children would remain unprotected.

Fee Waivers for Indigent Applicants Another of the principal sticking points on TPS registration has been over the willingness of INS district directors to waive the fees based on the inability of indigent applicants to pay. The final rule noted that commenters on the interim rule had "complained that the waiver of fees for applications has not been uniformly applied by District Offices."

The supplementary note to the rule states that the INS "will consider all requests to waive fees and will act favorably when an applicant

meets the regulatory requirements." Those requirements are the federal poverty guidelines.

On June 2, a federal judge in Sacramento ordered the INS to "promptly reconsider all denials of fee waiver applications" for Salvadorans who applied in the San Francisco INS district. Judge David F. Levi also enjoined the INS from denying fee waivers to Salvadorans in the San Francisco district who can show they have an income level below the federal poverty guidelines.

An INS source said that the injunction conforms with the standard for waivers set by the regulations, but could not say how previously denied cases would be handled.

Robert Rubin, managing attorney for the National Refugee Rights Project of the San Francisco Lawyers' Committee for Urban Affairs, who filed the class action suit that brought about Judge Levi's order, told Refugee Reports, "The final regulations look fine on paper, but we are more concerned about local practices where arbitrary decision-making is taking place." Rubin said that Salvadorans earning as little as \$50 a month have been denied waivers in Los Angeles.

Udell, of Houston's CARECEN office, said the major problem he has seen with waivers has not been denials per se, but rather long delays and INS requests for further documentation, such as tax forms and check stubs from employers, "that these people don't have."

Rubin also noted the implications of the ruling for extending the TPS registration period. "A federal court has determined that the INS has unlawfully denied TPS for 5 months of a 6 month program," he said. "If Congress intended allowing Salvadorans to register for 6 months, Congress needs to extend the registration period."

Liberians, Kuwaitis, and Lebanese Attorney General Dick Thornburgh added three more nationalities to the TPS list on March 27--Liberians, Lebanese, and Kuwaitis (see Refugee Reports, Vol. XII, Nos. 2 and 3). A total of 74 Kuwaitis, 927 Liberians, and 2,490 Lebanese had applied for the program, as of May 24, according to the INS.

The policy regarding whether long-time Palestinian residents of Kuwait and Lebanon would be protected by TPS is "still pending," according to the INS. Albert Mokhiber, director of

legal services for the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, who met recently with Deputy Attorney General Rex Ford on this issue, told Refugee Reports, "We think a positive decision will be forthcoming soon." Ford declined to comment.

A distinction is made in the Immigration Act--which carries over into the regulations--between "generic" TPS now enjoyed by these three nationalities and the specific mandate of TPS for Salvadorans. Although Congress stipulated a "reasonable fee" for Salvadoran TPS, the law caps the generic registration fee at \$50.

Rubin asked, "Is it 'reasonable' to charge a Salvadoran five times more than a Kuwaiti?"

UPDATE

° On May 20, the Supreme Soviet passed a law that will give Soviet citizens the right to travel and live abroad. The bill, which passed by a vote of 320 to 37 with 32 abstentions, is not due to be implemented until January 1, 1993. At that point, exit visas will no longer be required for those wishing to leave. The Law on Entry and Exit, as the measure is known, sets a five-year limit on exit restrictions based on would-be emigrants' knowledge of state secrets, a barrier that has stood in the way of "refuseniks" who have been denied exit visas.

° As of the end of April, seven months into FY 91, only 15,890 Soviet refugees had been admitted to the United States. The FY 91 ceiling for the Soviet Union is 50,000. A State Department source told Refugee Reports, "We don't know if we'll reach the ceiling."

The United States has increased the number of interviews, but has had difficulty moving U.S. approved cases out. The problem is attributed, in part, to "uneven interpretation" by Soviet authorities about what constitutes "immediate relatives" for purposes of extending invitations from abroad.

° On May 22, both the Senate and House gave

final approval to a \$556 million emergency assistance bill to provide relief for Iraqi refugees displaced as a result of the Gulf War. A total of \$321 is slated to defray military costs; \$235 million will cover State Department and Agency for International Development expenses. The United Nations has appealed for \$448.9 million to cover the costs of the Gulf emergency through August 31, and was reporting a shortfall of \$340.3 million, as of June 3.

- Between March and April, more than 100 Acehnese asylum seekers from northern Sumatra, Indonesia fled to Malaysia by boat. The Malaysian government has stated that it will forcibly return the Acehnese despite their claim for asylum. For the past 18 months, the Indonesian army has been trying to suppress a separatist movement in Aceh. Some 2,000 people are said to have been killed in the conflict, reports The Economist.

- The United States has accepted about 350 Libyan soldiers into the refugee resettlement program. The soldiers, former prisoners of war in Chad, had been given the choice of remaining as prisoners or agreeing to be trained by the United States as an insurgency force against Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi.

The force was stranded after a pro-Libyan group took over Chad in late 1990 and kicked them out, and no other country was willing to provide them sanctuary. The Libyans flew from Kenya to New York on May 16, according to a May 18 report in the Washington Post.

- U.S. refugee processing has resumed out of Khartoum, where it had been suspended for security reasons since the beginning of the year. In the first seven months of the fiscal year, 44 refugees have been admitted to the United States from Khartoum, out of a total of 1,935 African admissions. The FY 91 admissions ceiling for Africa is 4,900.

- The Bush Administration has published an interim rule in the May 31 Federal Register reversing its plan to remove the ban on HIV-positive refugees and immigrants. In January, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced a proposal to drop the four-year-old bar on HIV-infected persons entering the United States (see Refugee Reports Vol. XI, No. 7;

Vol. XII, No. 1). Now the Administration has reversed itself, retaining the ban on those infected with HIV, the human immunodeficiency virus, which is associated with AIDS.

In the 1990 Immigration Act, Congress authorized the Administration to determine which diseases should exclude a person from entering (or remaining, in the case of asylum seekers and legalization applicants) the United States. HHS's proposal in January to drop HIV infection--and several other diseases--from that category drew political opposition and many letters in protest. HHS responded by issuing a new interim rule that retains the exclusion on persons who are HIV-positive. During the 60 day comment period, a number of organizations that favor lifting the ban are pressing the Administration to reinstitute the January proposal.

- The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) became a part of a new division within HHS--the Administration for Children and Families--on April 15.

- On May 10, ORR proposed allocations of nearly \$44 million in targeted assistance funds to 41 counties with high concentrations of refugees and entrants. As in the past, counties in Florida and California will receive the lion's share of the funds--\$21.9 million for Florida, particularly the Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami and the Dade County public schools; \$14 million for California; the next largest recipients will be counties in New York with \$1.3 million. Another \$4.9 million in the targeted assistance program account will be awarded separately.

- ORR has proposed allocating \$70.5 million to states for FY 91 refugee resettlement social services out of an available \$82.9 million. The remaining \$12.4 million is to be used by ORR on a discretionary basis to fund individual refugee resettlement projects, particularly those that would reduce refugee dependence on public assistance. California is slated to receive \$21.3 million, plus \$1.1 million in incentive funds for mutual assistance associations (MAAs). New York, Florida, Texas, and Massachusetts will be the next largest recipients under the formula proposed in the April 29 Federal Register.

Ambassador Princeton N. Lyman, director of the State Department's Bureau for Refugee Programs, said that the repatriation of Kurdish refugees from the Turkish border "has turned into a flood." Lyman noted that because of "an unwillingness to go home under present security circumstances" many Kurds had not left the UN security zone in the Zakhu area of northern Iraq. He warned that a large camp population could remain in the secure zone in northern Iraq if the security situation in Dahok were not resolved.

Shortly thereafter, Iraqi forces withdrew from Dahok; within the three-day period of May 25-27, more than 50,000 returned to Dahok from the Zakhu area. The Zakhu camp population had been reduced to 45,000 by May 28.

Iran: Some Return; for Most, a Nervous Wait

Returns from Iran are slower, but increasing. According to the Iranian government, the refugee population in Iran had been reduced to 787,820 as of May 19, down from UNHCR's estimate of 1.4 million earlier in the month.

Several private witnesses testified about the situation in Iran, and all relayed the impression based on interviews with refugees there that the refugees in Iran would not be returning to Iraq as quickly as those on the Turkish border.

Two health professionals from Physicians for Human Rights testified that the lives of thousands of children are imperiled from contaminated and inadequate water supplies, and warned of "grave risks" of epidemics due to the intense summer heat that will come during the next few months.

Bill Frelick, of the U.S. Committee for Refugees, discussed the disparities in assistance to Iran and Turkey. "It is difficult for Iranians to reconcile the levels of international assistance that have been pledged to Turkey, despite its often contemptuous treatment of the Kurdish refugees, with the significantly more modest levels of support for an Iranian government that has acted responsibly."

Frelick pointed out that for every dollar that has been spent on an Iraqi refugee in Iran, \$7.60 has gone for a refugee on the Turkish-Iraq border. The discrepancy is largely attributable to a U.S. contribution heavily weighted away from Iran. Of more than \$200 million spent by the

United States on this refugee emergency, said Frelick, less than \$20 million has gone to refugees in Iran. Iran has been spending \$10 million per day to support the refugees, according to UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata.

Kennedy pressed Lyman on whether or not the Iranians were willing to accept U.S. assistance. Lyman suggested that Iran has not requested more direct assistance from the United States.

Kennedy said, "Although the leaders of Iran plead for international help, they have erected serious obstacles to assistance from both private voluntary agencies and the U.S. government."

[An Issue Brief based on Frelick's site visit to Iran will be available in June.]

CHAOS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA: GOVERNMENTS FALL, REFUGEES FLEE, MILLIONS FACE FAMINE

The overthrow of governments in Ethiopia and Somalia has created major new refugee flows in the Horn of Africa, exacerbated war- and drought-induced famine, and caused the collapse of international relief efforts.

"A wave of democracy is sweeping Africa," said Rep. Mervyn Dymally (D-Cal.) at a recent hearing, "but a wave of starvation overwhelms the wave of democracy."

The House Subcommittee on Africa, which Dymally chairs, held a joint hearing on the crisis in the Horn on May 30 with the Select Committee on Hunger. The Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs held a similar hearing on May 14.

Ethiopia's Mengistu Falls; Rebels Seize Control in Addis Ababa and Eritrea

The Marxist government of President Mengistu Haile Mariam collapsed during the last week of May. The regime's human rights abuses, disastrous economic policies, and forced relocation programs--along with the civil wars between the government and several different rebel groups--forced hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians into exile and



Hundreds of malnourished children are brought each day to the SOS Children's Village in Mogadishu, Somalia, which operates a feeding program. As food supplies in Mogadishu dwindle, an increasing number of people are falling into the "vulnerable" category. USCR/H. Ruiz

left the country in ruins.

Mengistu left the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, for exile in Zimbabwe on May 21. Immediately afterward, the United States pressured the new Ethiopian leadership to allow Israel to airlift 14,500 Ethiopian Jews out of Addis Ababa by threatening to end the United States' mediator role in peace talks scheduled in London between the Ethiopian government and rebel groups. The airlift was successfully completed in less than 30 hours, at a reported cost of more than \$42 million.

Within days of Mengistu's departure, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), which for decades has fought for Eritrean independence from Ethiopia, gained control of the only two government-held towns in Eritrea, bringing all of Eritrea (including the ports of Massawa and Assab, through which almost all relief supplies for Ethiopia enter) under EPLF control. The EPLF has formed an administration for Eritrea separate from Addis Ababa.

A coalition of other rebel groups, the

Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), led mainly by Tigrayan rebels, then surrounded, and with the blessing of the United States, entered and took over Addis Ababa. The nature of the EPRDF-led government, and whether the policies and practices that have led many Ethiopians to flee the country will end, remain big question marks. The Tigrayan rebels who lead the EPRDF have long espoused hard-line Marxism-Leninism, but have recently expressed a commitment to democracy and have promised to hold elections. However, knowledgeable observers say it is doubtful that the EPRDF, which cooperated with the EPLF while both were fighting a common enemy, will ultimately accept Eritrean independence.

The collapse of the Ethiopian government brought relief efforts throughout Ethiopia to a standstill. More than 6 million people are threatened by famine in Ethiopia, including hundreds of thousands of refugees and returnees. At the May 30 hearing, Rep. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.), commenting on the famine and EPRDF's promise

to hold elections in Ethiopia within a year, said, "It would be a tragedy if a million Ethiopians starved before they get the chance to vote in next year's election."

Even before the recent events, the sheer number and remote locations of the refugees and returnees, shortfalls in donor pledges, and lag time between pledges and food arrivals had overstretched UNHCR's ability to respond. Malnutrition in the refugee camps had soared to 25 percent, causing Somali refugees to begin to return to Somalia, even though there is no UNHCR plan to assist them.

Reportedly, large numbers of Ethiopians associated with the Mengistu regime have fled the country since the fall of the government. As many as 100,000 have entered or are headed towards Sudan; 30,000 have entered Djibouti; and 25,000 are said to have crossed into Kenya.

Somalia: Barre Gone, But Somalis Remain Fragmented

In January, the 21-year-old dictatorship of Gen. Mohammed Siad Barre, a regime widely accused of gross human rights abuses, ended. Before fleeing Mogadishu, the Somali capital, Barre's troops shelled the city and set off a frenzy of looting, killing, and raping--in which rebels and armed civilians also took part.

Fighting spread throughout the country; more than 200,000 Somalis and 150,000 Ethiopian refugees who had been living in Somalia fled to Ethiopia (where 385,000 Somali and 398,000 Sudanese refugees were already living); and different rebel groups--each associated with one of the large Somali clans (traditional family groupings)--took control in northern, central, and southern Somalia (the latter two groups turning against each other once Barre fled).

U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR) Africa policy analyst Hiram A. Ruiz, who recently returned from a fact-finding visit to Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya, told subcommittee members at the May 14 House hearing, "Much of Mogadishu [the Somali capital] is in ruins. Little food has entered the region since the fighting began, and almost all international agencies and relief groups continue to stay away. Malnutrition has started to spread among the vulnerable groups." Without rapid international aid, the entire population of Somalia could be at risk, Ruiz said.

In northern Somalia, the precipitous and unplanned return of thousands of Somali refugees from Ethiopia is causing concern. There is neither food nor water in the area, and there are reportedly hundreds of thousands of landmines buried under the rubble of the region's main city of Hargeisa, which is more than 90 percent destroyed.

Ruiz told the subcommittee members, "The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) must formulate and implement a plan to assist Somali refugees to return home.... Without this, a 'returnee emergency' will develop in northern Somalia."

As Many As 300,000 Will Die in Sudan: Roger P. Winter, director of the U.S. Committee for Refugees, recently returned from a site visit to southern Sudan and testified before both the Senate and House hearings on the situation in Sudan. At the May 14 hearing, Winter said, "The government of Sudan is the major culprit in the unfolding crisis in that country. Its policy choices have been, frankly, aberrant."

Last year, the Sudanese government sold its food reserves to Iraq in exchange for weapons to carry on its war against the southern-Sudanese based Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Later, when severe drought hit and it became evident that nine million Sudanese would be at risk (including many of the Sudan's 700,000 Ethiopian refugees), the government steadfastly denied there was a problem and prevented the international community from assisting. The Sudan government, said Winter, has now relented and allowed relief efforts to proceed in government-held areas, but it is already too late to reach all in need, and as many as 300,000 may die.

At the May 30 hearing, Winter, noting that one of the main problems is getting food aid to at-risk civilians in distant areas, proposed that "the U.S. should seek to utilize the military logistical and medical capacity it has amassed in the Middle East to jump start relief efforts in the Horn of Africa, particularly western Sudan."

Relief workers in Ethiopia report that the government of Sudan has bombed Sudanese refugees attempting to reenter southern Sudan from Ethiopia, causing widespread panic. There

is no food in the areas in Sudan to which the refugees are seeking to return. Said one urgent appeal to the international community: "Food situation desperate. Please organize air drop as there is no food--repeat, no food--for these people. Please act promptly."

House Subcommittees Urged To Support Horn of Africa Bill

At the May 30 hearing, Sharon Pauling, Africa policy analyst at Bread for the World, urged passage of H.R. 1454, the Horn of Africa Recovery and Food Security Act. The bill directs the United States to assure the people of the Horn access to food and other basic necessities; to target development assistance to poor and hungry people; to set forth a peace initiative aimed at stopping ongoing wars and conflicts; and to restrict aid to governments in the region until they make progress towards peace, democracy, and human rights. Rep. Bill Emerson (R-Mo.) said that the bill "puts people before politics, which is where they should have been all along."

Feature

ETHIOPIAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

"The scattered pattern of Ethiopian resettlement has had and continues to have an adverse effect both on individual self-sufficiency and long-term community stability and development," says a recently published report on a nationwide study of Ethiopian refugees' development needs. The report adds, "This is directly related to the lack of policy regarding domestic resettlement of Ethiopian refugees, and the lack of coordinated efforts at the national level to place Ethiopian refugees in communities with an established [Ethiopian] presence."

This report, The Development Needs of Ethiopian Refugees in the United States, is based on a study carried out by the Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC) with funding from the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). The report's publication is one of two recent develop-

ments that have focused attention on Ethiopian refugees in the United States. The other is ECDC's becoming the newest refugee resettlement agency to participate in the State Department's Refugee Reception and Placement Program (see box).

Study's Findings Based on Consultations in Six Cities

Besides collecting and analyzing federal and state data on Ethiopian refugees, ECDC met with federal, state, and local officials, service providers, and representatives of Ethiopian community groups in Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York City, and Chicago. Among the findings were:

- ° There are some 50,000 to 75,000 Ethiopians living in the United States, mostly in urban areas. They include refugees (more than 22,400 Ethiopians were resettled in the United States between 1980 and 1990), asylees, naturalized U.S. citizens, and others.
- ° Few culturally and linguistically appropriate orientation materials are available to Ethiopian refugees (before or after resettlement) or to resettlement agencies and service providers.
- ° The geographical dispersion of Ethiopians makes it difficult for service providers to offer culturally and linguistically appropriate services, for Ethiopians to develop strong communities, and for Ethiopian mutual assistance associations (MAAs) to secure funding for Ethiopian-specific programs and services.
- ° Many Ethiopian refugees lack the skills or education necessary to achieve self-sufficiency. Some 40 percent of Ethiopian adults in the United States have less than an eighth grade education, including some who are illiterate. Women in particular often lack transferable work skills, yet no programs exist to ease their entry into the workforce.
- ° Professional and more highly skilled Ethiopians are underemployed and do not have access to skills recertification programs or appropriate level ESL classes aimed at helping them acquire recertification. Such programs have been provided in

**ETHIOPIAN REFUGEE ARRIVALS
BY STATE OF INITIAL RESETTLEMENT
CUMULATIVE FROM 1983-1990**

STATE	NUMBER OF ARRIVALS	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
California	3,609	22.3%
Texas	2,026	12.5%
Maryland	1,050	6.6%
New York	930	5.8%
Distict of Columbia	760	4.7%
Illinois	652	4.0%
Washington	642	3.9%
Georgia	608	3.8%
Missouri	577	3.6%
Virginia	489	3.0%
Minnesota	475	2.9%
Arizona	463	2.9%
Pennsylvania	442	2.7%
Florida	415	2.6%
Ohio	358	2.2%
Massachusetts	312	1.9%
New Jersey	293	1.8%
Michigan	263	1.6%
Colorado	243	1.5%
Nevada	228	1.4%
South Dakota	216	1.3%
Oregon	165	1.0%
Other	941	5.8%
TOTAL	16,157	100%

Source: Office of Refugee Resettlement

the past for other refugee groups.

Newly Resettled Ethiopian Refugees Often Experience Frustration One problem resulting from the lack of appropriate orientation materials and programs for Ethiopians due to be resettled in the United States is that many arrive with unrealistic expectations. According to Dr. Tsehay Teferre, ECDC's director, employment is another major problem. Ten years ago, most Ethiopians in the United States were urban, more highly educated, and had English abilities. "Now," says Teferre, "we're getting more and more people who are illiterate or who have less education and skills, as well as larger families and older people. That makes resettlement, particularly finding the type of employment the refugees would like, more difficult." Teferre adds, "Even so, Ethiopians have the lowest welfare usage among refugees in the United States."

Lissanne Negussie, Executive Director of Washington, D.C.'s, Ethiopian Community Center (ECC), concurs. "We have many people with university degrees who are working as cab drivers and parking attendants," Negussie said. "Those with transferable skills, like engineers, accountants, pharmacists, and nurses, are often able to find employment in related fields, but professionals with backgrounds in the social sciences are in bad shape," he added.

According to Teferre, the emphasis on early employment negatively affects both the less educated and the better educated. Those who are less educated and unskilled don't have a chance to develop language and other skills that would help them to become self-sufficient. What language training refugees do receive, Teferre says, "is designed to enable them to go into an entry level job. People are being trained, literally, to be good dishwashers."

ECDC JOINS RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES

In September, the Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC) joined the ranks of national voluntary agencies participating in the State Department's refugee reception and placement program. It is the first community-based organization to join the volag group since the passage of the Refugee Act of 1980. To make the program national in scope, ECDC, which is based in Arlington, Virginia, near Washington, D.C., has affiliated with the Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago, the Refugee Services Alliance in Houston, and the New York/New Jersey area's Committee to Aid Ethiopian Refugees. Affiliates in Los Angeles, Boston, and Indianapolis will join ECDC's resettlement program in FY 92. ECDC executive director Teferra told Refugee Reports, "We hope that the voluntary agencies will take us as a serious partner. They have been doing a good job; we hope to complement that." ECDC expects to resettle some 310 free cases and a number of family reunification cases during fiscal year 1991. Initially, ECDC expects to resettle only African refugees.

On March 18, ECDC's affiliate in Houston, the Refugee Services Alliance (RSA), resettled its first three refugees. RSA executive director Kassahun Bisrat said that the three young adults are temporarily taking classes to brush up their English language skills, but have already been going on job interviews. According to Bisrat, whose organization serves not only Ethiopians, but also Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians, the \$460 State Department grant per refugee that the agency will get will not go far in meeting the refugees' initial resettlement needs. "To adequately sustain our program," Bisrat said, "we would need to receive five new cases per month."

Teferra says that ECDC had various objectives in seeking to become a resettlement agency. "So far, the Ethiopian community has been on the receiving end. We felt that the community should be able to give something back." Teferra adds that Africans have always been on the sidelines, and consequently have been unable to influence decisions that affect the resettlement of African refugees, who represent only a small fraction of the refugees resettled in the

United States each year. "For many years, we have been concerned about U.S. admissions policy--who comes, how many come, etc. Those decisions have been made by the State Department in consultation with the voluntary [resettlement] agencies. Being on the outside, we were never part of the consultation process. We decided that we had to be on the inside to help influence that process."

Refugee Reports asked Teferra if, given the many deep divisions among those classified as Ethiopian--including groups such as Eritreans, who may not consider themselves "Ethiopian", ECDC's role as a resettlement agency might cause problems in the politically sensitive Ethiopian community. "You have to understand something about ECDC," Teferra said. "It is true, as our name indicates, that we are an Ethiopian community organization. But for seven years, our position has been that ECDC is a humanitarian agency that does not engage itself in inter-ethnic or nationality discords. When people needed a service, we helped them. Whether they were Eritrean, Oromo, Tigrayan, Amhara, Somali--it didn't matter. Therefore, over time, people began to develop confidence and to view us just as a service provider."

Besides the free cases and family reunification cases ECDC expects to resettle, the agency also hoped to resettle some Ethiopian refugees through the Private Sector Initiative (PSI) as a way to achieve greater refugee admissions from Africa. But according to Teferra, the State Department has placed too many hurdles for ECDC to be able to pursue PSI this year. He says that besides the numerical imbalance (Africans account for nearly 30 percent of the world's refugees, but only 4 percent of projected refugee admissions to the United States during FY 91), the need for resettlement for Africans is not fully understood, either by the State Department or by the resettlement agencies. "We want PSI not because the Ethiopian community is rich--it's not--or because refugees' families here are rich enough to pay their expenses, but simply because we wanted to show our humanitarian concern for members of our community who are suffering in African countries of asylum," Teferra said.

Professional and more highly educated refugees are obliged to find employment as soon as possible after arrival, often taking entry level jobs in the service industry. Because they often work two jobs to manage financially, they find it difficult to develop the level of English proficiency or enroll in classes that would enable them to re-establish themselves in their professions. "For the individual, that is frustrating," Teferra told Refugee Reports. "But it is also frustrating for the Ethiopian community as a whole. When you have a professional working as a dishwasher, it is a disincentive to others to study or gain skills." According to the ECDC study, "While most [Ethiopians] choose employment and economic independence over public assistance, the majority continue to be employed in jobs that are ill-suited to their training and experience. It has been estimated that as many as 50 percent of the Ethiopians in the labor force are underemployed."

Teferra says that if employment counselors could spend more time with newly resettled clients, they might at least be able to help them find employment in a related field. He cited the example of two doctors who were found jobs as laboratory technicians at a hospital. "Although it is still an entry-level position, they are at least in an atmosphere with which they are familiar," Teferra said. But finding that type of job placement takes time, and, according to Teferra, resettlement agencies' goal of generating positive early employment statistics prevents their counselors from spending that much time with clients.

Mental Health Problems on the Increase As with other refugee groups, adjusting to a new society, dealing with racial discrimination, finding and maintaining affordable housing, and working long hours contribute to frustration and stress for Ethiopian refugees. There is a significant difference, however. According to the ECDC study, because Ethiopians are a new immigrant/refugee group, they lack the "traditional support systems such as family, community elders, and churches, which provide a foundation of strength and stability to individuals." The combination of frustration and stress, and the absence of appropriate support systems, has led to "an alarming increase in the number of people suffering from depression and substance abuse, and the num-



Kassai Gebreab, his wife, sons, and two young neighbors remember Eritreans facing famine in their homeland at a candlelight vigil held in Washington, D.C., in 1990. Gebreab and his family, who live in Alexandria, Virginia, were among hundreds of Eritreans who joined the vigil. USCR/H. Ruiz

ber of incidents involving violent behavior, domestic violence, and child abuse."

One particularly vulnerable group is the elderly. According to ECC's Negussie, "Loneliness and isolation are major problems. Although many of the elderly live with their children, they remain isolated. They often do not speak English, do not understand how to use public transportation, and may not be able to communicate with their grandchildren, who sometimes speak only English." Negussie noted that there are few social

services that target the elderly, and that while community groups such as the ECC would like to offer more services to vulnerable groups, their funding--which comes primarily from federal monies--is geared towards providing employment-related services, not social services. Although they try to offer some other services such as housing assistance, MAAs do not have the resources to reach out to groups such as the elderly.

While loneliness and isolation present problems for the elderly, they can also lead to mental health problems, alcoholism, and homelessness for younger people, especially single males. Some of those with mental health problems are able to find treatment, though they rarely have access to mental health professionals who speak their language. Others fall through the very loosely knit net of community support and services and wind up in shelters or in the streets. Negussie says that his organization regularly sees young men who are homeless.

A small but growing number of those who simply cannot make it in the United States have returned to Ethiopia. According to Fernando Chang-Muy, of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) Washington office, many of those who seek repatriation--virtually all single young men--appear to have mental health problems. They are referred to a Washington Ethiopian psychologist, one of the few Ethiopian mental health practitioners in the United States, who determines if they are competent to make a decision regarding repatriation. During 1985-86, only two Ethiopian refugees repatriated to Ethiopia. Between 1987 and 1990, 32 repatriated through UNHCR auspices. According to Chang-Muy, most of them cited loneliness and homesickness as reasons for wanting to repatriate.

Study Offers Recommendations The participants in the ECDC study made a number of recommendations about improving resettlement for Ethiopians. Among these are:

- ° Develop linguistically appropriate orientation materials and provide overseas orientation programs.
- ° Urge resettlement agencies to involve Ethiopian MAAs in the orientation programs they provide

for newly arrived Ethiopian refugees.

- ° Establish a resettlement policy that settles Ethiopians in clusters or in communities with an established Ethiopian presence.
- ° Develop a national skills recertification program that is open to all refugee professionals.
- ° Develop health, mental health, and substance abuse education material targeted to Ethiopians; fund programs to train Ethiopian health and mental health paraprofessionals; develop cross-cultural education materials for service providers.

The Development Needs of Ethiopian Refugees in the United States is available for \$3.00 for postage and handling from the Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc., 3213 Columbia Pike, Suite 101, Arlington, VA 22204. (703) 685-0510.

Job Board

[If you know of job openings in the refugee field, please let us know at our office in Washington (address on back cover). If you wish, FAX the announcement to (202) 347-3418, attention: Virginia Hamilton.]

Director of Refugee Services: To supervise the American Council for Nationalities Service Refugee Resettlement Program, including the monitoring of subcontracts with local ACNS affiliates; supervising the refugee allocations process; administering the matching grant program; and supervising six professional staff of the Refugee Services Unit.

Contact: Position Recruitment, American Council for Nationalities Service, 95 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016. (212) 532-5858.

Paralegal: To perform client intake and interviewing; prepare asylum claims and work authorization requests; assist attorneys in preparing for hearings; prepare documentation for political asylum cases; help carry out group legal rights presentations; document INS/Border Patrol abuse.

Contact: Rogelio T. Nuñez, Executive Director, Casa de Proyecto Libertad, Inc., 306 E. Jackson 3rd Floor, Harlingen, TX 78550. (512) 425-9552.

**INVOLUNTARY U.S. RETURNS
OF CENTRAL AMERICANS AND HAITIANS**

	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua	Haiti
FY 1990					
Deportations	2,343	1,568	1,575	90	206
Exclusions	44	19	22	2	608
Required departures	637	627	231	162	16
Interdicted at Sea					1,196
Total	3,024	2,214	1,828	254	2,026
FY 1989					
Deportations	3,878	3,434	2,905	81	127
Exclusions	27	13	32	5	703
Required Departures	921	773	275	127	23
Interdicted at Sea					4,551
Total	4,826	4,220	3,212	213	5,404

This table includes data for the fiscal years listed that were received by March 1991. It categorizes the number of persons expelled by the United States and returned to their country of citizenship (i.e., Salvadorans to El Salvador, etc.).

Source: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service

REFUGEE REPORTS is published monthly for \$37.50 per year for one subscription, \$25.00 each for two or more subscriptions to the same addressee, or \$25.00 each for ten or more subscriptions requested at the same time, mailed to separate addresses; overseas postage is an additional \$24.00 for second class or an additional \$75.00 for airmail; by ACNS, 95 Madison Avenue, Third Floor, New York, NY 10016. Second Class Postage paid at New York and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: send address changes to *Refugee Reports*, Sunbelt Fulfillment Services, P.O. Box 41094, Nashville, TN 37204.

Editorial comments and inquiries should be sent to: *Refugee Reports*, 1025 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 920, Washington, DC 20005. All communications regarding subscriptions should be sent to: *Refugee Reports* Subscriptions, Sunbelt Fulfillment Services, P.O. Box 41094, Nashville, TN 37204. (615) 377-3322.

Basic subscription rate for 12 issues per year: \$37.50; Multiple-copy rate: \$25.00; Single copies of back issues: \$4.00

Co-Editors: Bill Frelick and Virginia Hamilton; Staff Writers: Court Robinson and Hiram A. Ruiz

Distribution Manager: Carolyn Moore; Production Coordinator: Koula Papanicolas

© 1991 American Council for Nationalities Service. Rights of reproduction and redistribution reserved. ISSN 0884-3554

Refugee Reports

**A News Service of the U.S. Committee for
Refugees, a Project of the American
Council for Nationalities Service**

Sunbelt Fulfillment Services

P.O. Box 41094

Nashville, TN 37204

**Address Correction Requested
Return Postage Guaranteed**

20814KIANKE004 JAN92 26000****
ED KIANKA ACQUISITIONS EOTRR
CONGRESSIONAL INFORMATION SER
4520 EAST-WEST HWY STE 800
BETHESDA MD 20814